

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-128 (Canceled).

129. (Currently Amended) A method for communicating electronic data, the method comprising:

receiving a screenname associated with a user of a sending device at an intermediary located between the sending device and an intended recipient of an electronic message, wherein the intermediary is associated with a provider of a messaging service and the screenname uniquely identifies the user within the messaging service of the provider;

authenticating, at the intermediary, a-the user of a-the sending device-at-an-intermediary located-between-the-sending-device-and-an-intended-recipient-of-an-electronic-message, wherein authenticating includes receiving a screenname associated with the user using the received screenname;

determining, at the intermediary, an address of the sending device;

associating, at the intermediary, the address of the sending device with the received screenname;

receiving, from the sending device, the electronic message at the intermediary;

identifying the address of the sending device based on the received electronic message;

determining the screenname based on the identified address and the association between the address of the sending device and the screenname;

changing the electronic message to include the determined screenname;

filtering the changed electronic message based on the screenname included in the changed electronic message.

130. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 129 wherein the sending device is a client device.

131. (Canceled)

132. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 129 wherein the address of the sending device includes an Internet protocol address.

133. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 129 wherein the intermediary comprises a layer 4 redirection program.

134. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 129 wherein the electronic message is an electronic mail message.

135. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 129 wherein the electronic message is a news posting.

136. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 129 wherein changing the electronic message comprises appending the determined screenname to the electronic message.

137. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 136 wherein appending the determined screenname includes appending the determined screenname as a header to the electronic message.

138. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 129 wherein filtering the changed electronic message includes:

determining whether the electronic message received from the sending device has characteristics of a message to be blocked; and

blocking the electronic message when the electronic message is determined to have characteristics of a message to be blocked.

139. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 138 wherein determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked comprises determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked using a level 4 redirection program.

140. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 138 wherein determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked comprises determining whether the electronic ~~data message~~ has characteristics of a message to be blocked based upon the screenname included in the changed electronic message.

141. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 138 wherein blocking the electronic message comprises blocking the electronic message using a level 4 redirection program.

142. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 138 wherein determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked comprises determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of an undesirable news posting.

143. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 138 wherein determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked comprises determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of spam.

144. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 143 wherein determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of spam comprises:

counting a number of connections that are open with the sending device; and

determining that the electronic message has characteristics of spam when the number of connections that are open with the sending device exceeds a threshold number.

145. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 144 wherein the threshold number is configurable.

146. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 138 further comprising blocking future electronic messages from the sending device for at least a period of time when the electronic message is determined to have characteristics of a message to be blocked.

147. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 143 wherein determining whether the electronic ~~data~~ message has characteristics of spam comprises:

counting a number of electronic messages that have been received from the sending device during a period of time; and

determining that the electronic message has characteristics of spam to be blocked when the number of messages received from the sending device during the period of time exceeds a threshold number.

148. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 147 wherein the period of time is configurable.

149. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 129 further comprising redirecting the received electronic message from the intended recipient to a computing device capable of performing at least the identifying.

150. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 149 wherein redirecting the received electronic message comprises changing a destination address associated with the received electronic message from the intended recipient to the computing device.

151. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 129 wherein the electronic message includes a fraudulent return address.

152. (Canceled)

153. (Canceled)

154. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium storing a computer program for, the computer program comprising instructions for causing a processing device to perform the following operations:

receive a screenname associated with a user of a sending device at an intermediary located between the sending device and an intended recipient of an electronic message, wherein the intermediary is associated with a provider of a messaging service and the screenname uniquely identifies the user within the messaging service of the provider;

authenticate, at the intermediary a-the user of a-the sending device at an intermediary located between the sending device and an intended recipient of an electronic message, wherein authenticating includes receiving a screenname associated with the user using the received screenname;

determine, at the intermediary, an address of the sending device;

associate, at the intermediary, the address of the sending device with the received screenname;

receive, from the sending device, the electronic message at the intermediary located between the sending device and an intended recipient of the electronic message;

identify the address of the sending device based on the received electronic message;

determine the screenname based on the identified address and the association between the address of the sending device and the screenname;

change the electronic message to include the determined screenname; and

filter the changed electronic message based on the screenname included in the changed electronic message.

155. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 154 wherein the sending device is a client device.

156. (Canceled)

157. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 154 wherein the address of the sending device includes an Internet protocol address.

158. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 154 wherein the intermediary comprises a layer 4 redirection program.

159. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 154 wherein the electronic message is an electronic mail message.

160. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 154 wherein the electronic message is a news posting.

161. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 154 wherein, to change the electronic message, the computer program comprise instructions for causing the processing device to append the determined screenname to the electronic message.

162. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 161 wherein, to append the determined screenname, the computer program ~~comprise~~ comprises instructions for causing the processing device to append the determined screenname as a header to the electronic message.

163. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 154 wherein, to filter the changed electronic message, the computer program comprises instructions for causing the processing device to:

determine whether the electronic message received from the sending device has characteristics of a message to be blocked; and

block the electronic message when the electronic message is determined to have characteristics of a message to be blocked.

164. (Current Amended) The medium of claim 163 wherein, to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked, the computer program ~~comprise~~ comprises instructions for causing the processing device to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked using a level 4 redirection program.

165. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 163 wherein, to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked, the computer program ~~comprise~~ comprises instructions for causing the processing device to determine whether the electronic ~~data~~ message has characteristics of a message to be blocked based upon the determined screenname included in the changed electronic message.

166. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 163 wherein, to block the electronic message, the computer program ~~comprise~~ comprises instructions for causing the processing device to block the electronic message using a level 4 redirection program.

167. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 163 wherein, to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked, the computer program ~~comprise~~ comprises instructions for causing the processing device to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of an undesirable news posting.

168. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 163 wherein, to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked, the computer program ~~comprise~~ comprises instructions for causing the processing device to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of spam.

169. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 168 wherein, to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of spam, the computer program ~~comprise~~ comprises instructions for causing the processing device to:

count a number of connections that are open with the sending device; and

determine that the electronic message has characteristics of spam when the number of connections that are open with the sending device exceeds a threshold number.

170. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 169 wherein the threshold number is configurable.

171. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 163 wherein the computer program comprises instructions for causing the processing device to block future electronic messages from the sending device for at least a period of time when the electronic message is determined to have characteristics of a message to be blocked.

172. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 168 wherein, to determine whether the electronic data has characteristics of spam, the computer program ~~comprise~~ comprises instructions for causing the processing device to:

count a number of electronic messages that have been received from the sending device during a period of time; and

determine that the electronic message has characteristics of spam to be blocked when the number of messages received from the sending device during the period of time exceeds a threshold number.

173. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 172 wherein the period of time is configurable.

174. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 154 wherein the computer program ~~comprise~~ comprises instructions for causing the processing device to redirect the received electronic message from the intended recipient to a computing device capable of performing at least the identifying.

175. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 174 wherein, to redirect the received electronic message, the computer program ~~comprise~~ comprises instructions for causing the



processing device to change a destination address associated with the received electronic message from the intended recipient to the computing device.

176. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 154 wherein the electronic message includes a fraudulent return address.

177. (Canceled)

178. (Canceled)

179. (Currently Amended) A method for communicating electronic data in a manner that identifies a sender, the method comprising:

receive a user-defined identifier associated with a user of a sending device at an intermediary located between the sending device and an intended recipient of an electronic message, wherein the intermediary is associated with a provider of a messaging service and the user-defined identifier uniquely identifies the user within the messaging service of the provider;

authenticating, at the intermediary, a the user of a the sending device at an intermediary located between the sending device and an intended recipient of an electronic message, wherein authenticating includes receiving a user-defined identifier associated with the user using the user-defined identifier;

determining, at the intermediary, an address of the sending device;

associating, at the intermediary, the address of the sending device with the received user-defined identifier;

receiving, from the sending device, the electronic message at the intermediary;

identifying the address of the sending device based on the received electronic message;

determining the user-defined identifier associated with the user of the sending device based on the identified address and the association between the address of the sending device and the user-defined identifier;

changing the electronic message to include the determined user-defined identifier;  
and  
filtering the changed electronic message based on the user-defined identifier  
included in the changed electronic message.

180. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 179 wherein the sending device is a client device.

181. (Canceled)

182. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 179 wherein the address of the sending device includes an Internet protocol address.

183. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 179 wherein the intermediary comprises a layer 4 redirection program.

184. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 179 wherein the electronic message is an electronic mail message.

185. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 179 wherein the electronic message is a news posting.

186. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 179 wherein:  
changing the electronic message comprises appending the determined user-defined identifier to the electronic message.

187. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 186 wherein appending the determined user-defined identifier includes appending the determined user-defined identifier as a header to the electronic message.

188. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 179 wherein filtering the changed electronic message includes:

determining whether the electronic message received from the sending device has characteristics of a message to be blocked; and

blocking the electronic message when the electronic message is determined to have characteristics of a message to be blocked.

189. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 188 wherein determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked comprises determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked using a level 4 redirection program.

190. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 188 wherein determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked comprises determining whether the electronic ~~data message~~ has characteristics of a message to be blocked based upon the determined user-defined identifier.

191. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 188 wherein blocking the electronic message comprises blocking the electronic message using a level 4 redirection program.

192. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 188 wherein determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked comprises determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of an undesirable news posting.

193. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 188 wherein determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked comprises determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of spam.

194. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 193 wherein determining whether the electronic message has characteristics of spam comprises:

counting a number of connections that are open with the sending device; and  
determining that the electronic message has characteristics of spam when the  
number of connections that are open with the sending device exceeds a threshold number.

195. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 194 wherein the threshold number is configurable.

196. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 188 further comprising blocking future electronic messages from the sending device for at least a period of time when the electronic message is determined to have characteristics of a message to be blocked.

197. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 193 wherein determining whether the electronic data has characteristics of spam comprises:

counting a number of electronic messages that have been received from the sending device during a period of time; and

determining that the electronic message has characteristics of spam to be blocked when the number of messages received from the sending device during the period of time exceeds a threshold number.

198. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 197 wherein the period of time is configurable.

199. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 198 further comprising redirecting the received electronic message from the intended recipient to a computing device capable of performing at least the identifying.

200. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 199 wherein redirecting the received electronic message comprises changing a destination address associated with the received electronic message from the intended recipient to the computing device.

201. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 179 wherein the electronic message includes a fraudulent return address.

202. (Canceled)

203. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium storing a computer program for, the computer program comprising instructions for causing a processing device to perform the following operations:

receive a user-defined identifier associated with a user of a sending device at an intermediary located between the sending device and an intended recipient of an electronic message, wherein the intermediary is associated with a provider of a messaging service and the user-defined identifier uniquely identifies the user within the messaging service of the provider;

authenticate, at the intermediary, a-the user of a-the sending device at-an intermediary located between the sending device and an intended recipient of an electronic message, wherein authenticating includes receiving a user-defined identifier associated with the user using the user-defined identifier;

determine, at the intermediary, an address of the sending device;

associate, at the intermediary, the address of the sending device with the user-defined identifier;

receive, from the sending device, the electronic message at the intermediary;

identify the address of the sending device based on the received electronic message;

determine the user-defined identifier associated with the user of the sending device based on the identified address and the association between the address of the sending device and the user-defined identifier;

change the electronic message to include the determined user-defined identifier;  
and

filtering the changed electronic message based on the user-defined identifier included in the changed electronic message.

204. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 203 wherein the sending device is a client device.

205. (Canceled)

206. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 203 wherein the address of the sending device includes an Internet protocol address.

207. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 203 wherein the intermediary comprises a layer 4 redirection program.

208. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 203 wherein the electronic message is an electronic mail message.

209. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 203 wherein the electronic message is a news posting.

210. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 203 wherein, to change the electronic message, the computer program ~~comprise~~comprises instructions for causing the processing device to append the determined user-defined identifier to the electronic message.

211. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 210 wherein, to append the determined user-defined identifier, the computer program ~~comprise~~comprises instructions for causing the processing device to append the determined user-defined identifier as a header to the electronic message.

212. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 203 wherein, to filter the changed electronic message, the computer program comprises instructions for causing the processing device to:

determine whether the electronic message received from the sending device has characteristics of a message to be blocked; and

block the electronic message when the electronic message is determined to have characteristics of a message to be blocked.

213. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 212 wherein, to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked, the computer program ~~comprise~~comprises instructions for causing the processing device to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked using a level 4 redirection program.

214. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 212 wherein, to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked, the computer program ~~comprise~~comprises instructions for causing the processing device to determine whether the electronic ~~data message~~ has characteristics of a message to be blocked based upon the determined user-defined identifier.

215. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 212 wherein, to block the electronic message, the computer program ~~comprise~~comprises instructions for causing the processing device to block the electronic message using a level 4 redirection program.

216. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 212 wherein, to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked, the computer program ~~comprise~~comprises instructions for causing the processing device to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of an undesirable news posting.

217. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 212 wherein, to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of a message to be blocked, the computer program ~~comprise~~comprises instructions for causing the processing device to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of spam.

218. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 217 wherein, to determine whether the electronic message has characteristics of spam, the computer program ~~comprise~~ comprises instructions for causing the processing device to:

count a number of connections that are open with the sending device; and  
determine that the electronic message has characteristics of spam when the number of connections that are open with the sending device exceeds a threshold number.

219. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 218 wherein the threshold number is configurable.

220. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 212 wherein the computer program comprises instructions for causing the processing device to block future electronic messages from the sending device for at least a period of time when the electronic message is determined to have characteristics of a message to be blocked.

221. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 217 wherein, to determine whether the electronic data has characteristics of spam, the computer program ~~comprise~~ comprises instructions for causing the processing device to:

count a number of electronic messages that have been received from the sending device during a period of time; and

determine that the electronic message has characteristics of spam to be blocked when the number of messages received from the sending device during the period of time exceeds a threshold number.

222. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 221 wherein the period of time is configurable.

223. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 203 wherein the computer program ~~comprise~~ comprises instructions for causing the processing device to redirect the received



electronic message from the intended recipient to a computing device capable of performing at least the identifying.

224. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 223 wherein, to redirect the received electronic message, the computer program ~~comprise~~ comprises instructions for causing the processing device to change a destination address associated with the received electronic message from the intended recipient to the computing device.

225. (Previously Presented) The medium of claim 203 wherein the electronic message includes a fraudulent return address.

226. (Canceled)